186

West Randolph, Aug. 26, 1858.

Dear Wife:

I arrived in this village on Monday, at 3, P. M., having intersected our friend, Mr. May, at Nashua, and enjoying his company the remainder of the long ride. We were joined on the way by Rev. N. R. Johnston, our Covenanter friend, who has exerted himself so assiduously to get up the present series of anti-slavery meetings in the State. I found at the depot, a young lad waiting for me, to carry me in a wagon some four miles to the home of Benjamin W. Dyer, an old anti-slavery friend, and a free and independent thinker on all subjects, especially pertaining to reform. He was absent from home on my arrival, but got back before bedtime, and gave me a very cordial welcome. He has one of the finest farms in this region, and owns a great number of sheep and cattle. I find much prejudice against him, on account of his radical views, prevailing here, but his character is without blemish, and he is the President of the Temperance Society. His wife was formerly as radical as himself, I am told, but with her the pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and she now seems to be quite averse to all reformers.

Our meetings commenced on Tuesday forenoon, and ended last evening. We could not obtain any meeting-house in the place, so "anti-Garrisonian" are the churches here, and so we had to go into a hall connected with the tavern, used for dancing and other purposes. The seats were rough boards, which made it somewhat annoying to the ladies with their hoops and crinolines, but the hall was ~~somewhat~~ tolerably spacious, and answered very well, though at times uncomfortably crowded. Persons were present from various towns in the region round about, drawn together from various motives, that of curiosity, in regard to myself, being dominant. Our discussions covered the whole ground — the principal speakers being Mr. Pillsbury, Mr. May, Mr. Johnston, and myself. The type of anti-slavery, in this State, being almost wholly Republican, a good deal of uneasiness is felt by the leaders of the party lest we shall damage it; and we all did our best to that end, and I trust to some purpose. No one appeared in defence of the party, except an old Baptist clergyman, of Braintree, by the name of Baldwin, who exhibited a very good spirit, but was very easily disposed of. Throughout the meetings, the audience behaved with great propriety, except at the closing meeting, last evening, when a few disorderly spirits at the door tried to make some confusion, but their success was small. Mr. Pillsbury ploughs deeper than any of us, or else there is something in his manner of expressing himself that repels many from him. My own remarks were generally received with favor, and I am assured, on all hands, that my visit to Vermont will produce a most favorable impression, and remove much unfounded prejudice. I trust, for the sake of that cause which is so dear to my heart, that this may prove true; though I have no doubt that both pulpit and press will do their worst to misrepresent and caricature my views.

I have found no one here to proffer me any hospitality, and so have had to ride, after each evening meeting, some three or four miles, to a neighboring village, with an anti-slavery friend, in order to find lodging. In fact, though I have dated this letter "West Randolph," I am writing it in Braintree, at the home of James Hutchinson, a young married man, of more than common intelligence and energy, with whom Miss Holley and Miss Putnam tarried while here, and who, though an earnest Republican, is a subscriber to the Liberator, and an efficient anti-slavery laborer. I think he will be a Disunionist ultimately — just as soon as he understands the question in all its bearings.

We have had the loveliest weather possible since we left home — cool enough for a fire, and for blankets at night — a state of the atmosphere that would suit you exactly. The Green Mountains are dressed in their greenest attire, and present every phase of beauty and grandeur. This is a singularly picturesque and beautiful region, where "only man is vile." I wish you were here to enjoy it.

This afternoon, we shall take the cars — some 25 miles — to Montpelier, the capital of the State, where we are to hold two meetings to-morrow. The papers there are all hostile to us, and will be sure to abuse us; nevertheless, truth is stronger than all the powers of darkness, and we fear nothing.

Have Fanny and Franky yet got home? I have not seen them so long, that I feel a deep sense of bereavement, and long to embrace them, almost as though they had been lost, but were at last found.

Tell Wendell not to sit too long at the desk, but to take all the exercise he can before he goes over to Cambridge.

Should you write to me, send your letter to the care of Rev. N. R. Johnston, Topsham, Vt., unless you have something important that ought to reach me sooner.

Your loving husband,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

(Don't forget the cat and kitten.)